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APPROVED: Meeting No. 8-83

ATTEST:

Helen M. Heneghan

MAYOR AND COUNCIL
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND
MEETING NO. 6-83

March 7, 1983

The Mayor and Council of Rockville, Maryland, convened in work session in the Council Chamber, Rockville City Hall, Maryland at Vinson Street, Rockville, Maryland, on Monday, March 7, 1983, at 8:00 p.m.

PRESENT

Mayor John R. Freeland

Councilman Steve Abrams

Councilman Douglas Duncan

Councilwoman Viola Hovsepian

Councilman John Tyner, II

The Mayor in the Chair.

In attendance: City Manager Larry Blick; City Clerk Helen Heneghan; City Attorney Paul Glasgow.

Re: Rockville Seniors, Inc.

Jean Brady, President of Rockville Seniors, Inc., greeted the Council and noted her pleasure in having the opportunity to meet with the Council to discuss Rockville Seniors, Inc. She introduced members of the Board as follows: Vice President Francis Quinn; Secretary Bernice Grossman; Treasurer Ralph DeLisa; Disbursement Committee Sonja Fowler, Harriett Soder, Clarice Kayser; Ways and Means Committee Ray Schnell, Glenn Looper, May Beeley, Ira Walters, and staff liaison Ronald Olson & Alyse Holstein.

Mrs. Brady discussed the goal of the Center which is to become self-supported. She introduced Ray Schnell, co-chairman of the Ways & Means Committee, who briefed the Council on the status of the tax exemption process and the number of donations received to date. He then outlined the purpose of the commission and its fund raising activities as follows:

1. Personal & Corporate Sponsorships
2. Donations (furnishings, books, \$\$\$, etc.)
3. Bingo (since January 27, 1983)
4. Thrift Shop
5. Yard Sale
6. Celebrity Auction
7. Fashion Show.

The many and diverse programs were discussed by the Council and the opportunities for rental of the Center in order to increase income. The Council thanked the group for being present this evening.

Re: Senior Citizens Commission

Commission members present this evening were Chairman Jan Brown; and members Jean Brady, Estelle Berberian; Betty Bobst; Ben Hannan; Clarise Kayser.

a. Establishment of age for eligibility for programs and discounts for City services (Swim Center, Red Gate Golf Course, transportation, nutrition, etc.)

The Commission agreed that 60 years of age is appropriate and would provide for consistency. Also, it agreed that it is possible for Seniors' spouses to participate regardless of age.

Since the early 1970's the adopted age for those who could participate in the Rockville senior services and programs was 55 years old. This was an out-growth of an H.E.W. grant that was used to fund City senior programs in the early 1970's. At that time, the 55 year age limit remained and is in force currently except for the federally-funded Nutrition Program, for which the age is 60 years.

It is felt that the age 55 years is too low to be practical in today's society. One program that is in existence that is mandated by Title III Older Americans Act is the Nutrition Program. This program provides for subsidized meals for seniors over age 60 years. About 70 people are served Monday through Friday. The Nutrition Program will move to the Senior Center soon.

To avoid conflicts between the various senior services, the Senior Citizens Commission agreed to establish age 60 for the general senior services that exist including transportation, recreation programs, social services, health services, senior center, etc. The City does provide discounts for senior citizens in two other areas which affect revenue collection toward the golf course and swim center.

In reviewing the issue, staff does not think citizens who are between 60 and 65 years old will take advantage of the programs unless they are retired. At the pool and golf course, however, someone could have the ability to pay and take advantage of the facilities and still be gainfully employed and not need a subsidy.

The goal at the pool and golf course is to break even in their operations. At the same time, staff cannot carry a large subsidy at these facilities as it is difficult to keep the net costs in line.

Staff recommends that the age for general senior services be set at age 60 years for now and evaluated over time, and set the age for golf and swim center at age 65 years old. This should include a "grandfather" clause to allow any

seniors who are participating now and are over age 55 but not yet 60 or 65 years of age to continue to participate.

The consensus of the Council agreed 60 should be the age and the spouses automatically included. Family details can be worked out at the pool as well as the age of the children. The City Manager suggested a subsidy be granted from the general fund for approximately \$11,000. This would pass on the cost to all of the tax payers and not just those at the pool. The Mayor and Council did not agree to this suggestion. It was the consensus of the Council to allow pool membership to subsidize the senior membership discounts.

b) Clarification of non-resident policy

The Senior Citizens Commission believes the existing policy with the addition of the nutrition policy at the Senior Center should be continued.

In 1977, the City developed a non-residency participation policy for seniors. The following is that policy:

1. The Commission recommends that non-resident members of non-church affiliated Senior Citizen Clubs of the City of Rockville as of April 1975, be allowed to continue their club membership. No additional non-resident members will be eligible after this date in the above clubs.

2. In regard to Citywide sponsored events, the Commission recommends that non-resident members in the above category be given the same privileges as resident members.

3. Regarding membership privileges of non-resident Seniors in church-affiliated clubs, the Commission recommends that non-residents who are members in good standing with a church may enjoy the same privileges as resident members, providing they became members prior to May 1, 1977.

Due to rising costs of staff and programs, non-resident members joining a church-affiliated club after the above date will have to pay a non-resident fee. The staff will determine the cost of the non-resident fee for each event.

4. The commission recommends that as of July 1, 1976, the Pump House Senior Citizens Center be opened only to residents of the City of Rockville. Residents may occasionally bring guests if it has been cleared in advance with the Director.

This recommended change is due to the fact that when the Pump House Senior Citizens Center began several years ago it was funded with money from a federal grant. Beginning July 1, 1976, the Pump House Senior Citizens Center has been funded with Rockville City funds.

Also, the Pump House is not a club with a membership roll; therefore, it is not possible to establish a cut-off date for acceptance of non-resident Senior Citizens into membership. Consequently, the cut-off date has to be based on the date of the changing of the funds.

5. Regarding transportation to Senior Citizen club meetings and City-sponsored events, the Commission recommends that all non-resident members be required to provide their own transportation.

The transportation provided by the City for Seniors on a regular basis such as to shopping centers and medical facilities is available only for residents. Therefore, non-resident members of clubs are not eligible for the above services.

Trips planned by clubs using City-owned and operated vehicles would be opened to all members of the clubs on a first-come, first-served basis.

Transportation to the Senior Citizens Pump House Center would be provided only for residents and their guests.

The nutrition Policy is:

Non-residents will: 1) be able to have access to Center services on the same basis as City residents on those days that they participate in the nutrition program; 2) be able to participate in special programs, i.e., classes, if an additional fee is paid and if City residents are given registration priority; 3) be able to participate in free activities; however, in cases where registration is required, City residents receive priority.

No non-residents, other than those covered by the "grandfather" clause may become a member of the Center.

To date, 45 of the original 95 grandfathered non-residents remain, and about 25 are still active in the programs.

Staff recommends that this policy be confirmed as it is presented.

The Council agreed to continue the same policy; however, they did clarify the visitors to the Center for the nutrition policy. Those visitors will be allowed to participate in the other activities except where preregistration is closed. Discussion followed with Councilman Abrams suggesting that preference for City residents be given in all areas and where public funds are involved and modify the grandfather position if necessary. It was pointed out that only 22 persons remain affected by the grandfather position and it was decided to stay with the present policy.

c) Taxicab Transportation Concept:

Currently the City operates a bus transportation system to take seniors to programs, senior center, nutrition, doctors, shopping, etc. In reviewing efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the system, staff has identified that taxicabs may provide an answer to improving efficiency.

Many times problems occur when seniors must wait for a bus that is picking up someone else beyond the pickup time or may have to ride the bus to multiple locations before reaching their stop. Tailoring a bus system to individual needs is a very difficult goal to achieve however.

Many times seniors do not come out to meet the bus at the proper time or decide not to ride and fail to call. This creates a compound effect. Other riders are forced to wait in the bus, but also takes up time on wasted mileage. Also, the large 48 passenger bus cannot go down narrow side streets which complicates scheduling further.

The staff and the Commission feel the taxi concept is worthwhile pursuing.

The staff will prepare two or three models that could be implemented with all the related costs and review them with the Senior Citizens Commission in one month. These would then be presented to the Mayor and Council for their review and approval.

The Commission feels this is a good concept if it will improve the existing system and make it more cost-effective.

The Mayor and Council agreed to use this transportation concept and agreed they will be anxious to see the model prepared by the staff. Councilman Abrams suggested that the staff consider tapping into the vanpool system and other one-use vehicles since many of them just sit around all day and are certainly usable. Lorraine Schack explained the policy for transportation to doctor's appointments at the request of Mrs. Hovsepian.

d) Handicapped Policy

Mrs. Bobst explained that there is a handicapped person at Bethany House who would like to take advantage of some of the programs and asked if this could be allowed. The Council said the handicapped could be included. Councilman Abrams cautioned against a blanket policy and suggested that it would depend on the service. Transportation, since the needs of the handicapped and seniors are similar, should be extended but not necessarily all other services. Council discussed this at length and a suggestion was made that an entire new policy

be adopted where the handicapped are concerned. Mayor Freeland suggested the Council would be ill-advised to form an instant policy or to ignore the issue entirely. He suggested that the Council's position be to make an exception in the two instances mentioned, and if the population grows, a separate policy can be developed. Mrs. Brown said there is no problem at this time. When it becomes one, it will be apparent to the Senior Commission and they will be back with a recommendation.

The Mayor and Council thanked the Senior Citizens Commission for their work and their presence this evening.

Re: Police - Status of Public
Safety Programs

Mr. Stout briefed the Council on serious crime trends, 1976-82 (Crime against the person and crime against property); Citizens-calls-for-service, 1981 vs. 1982; Specialized police services (Neighborhood watch, visibility of police, residential areas, recreation and park facilities, commercial/industrial areas, traffic concerns); Program Focus (investigations, patrol and the repeat offender, support services and systems development, youth and adult first offenders); FY 1984 and beyond (traffic problems, Metro/its implications).

With charts and graphs he showed the Council the incidents of crime from 1976 to 1982 whether it was a property crime, crimes against persons and other serious crimes. He also presented them with a map showing the calls for service. He told the Council there had been a 109 rabid raccoons in the County this year and 19 in the City. The Mayor and Council thanked Chief Stout.

Re: Information Systems -
Data Processing Development
and Timetable

John Lawton presented the Council with information and spoke to the Council on (1) review of the original goals of information systems development, (2) compared them to where the departments are at present, (3) presented an analysis of the differences in the original goals and the present situation, and (4) proposed "course corrections" to speed up the conversion and development process. This is the result of a reevaluation of progress conducted during the last two months. Staff is near the first anniversary of the arrival of the computer. It is appropriate to review where the City is going and where it has been, now that there is a year of experience.

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Two major "course corrections" are proposed. First, an increased emphasis on transferring and adapting existing software packages is proposed. Second, increased use of the HP 125 terminals/micro processors for implementation of planned systems in a distributed processing mode is proposed.

The Mayor and Council agreed to go with the course corrections as proposed.

Re: Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Council in work session, the meeting was adjourned at 11 p.m. to convene again in general session on Monday, March 14, 1983, at 8:00 p.m. or at the call of the Mayor.